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*Youth
lends a
hand*



VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS

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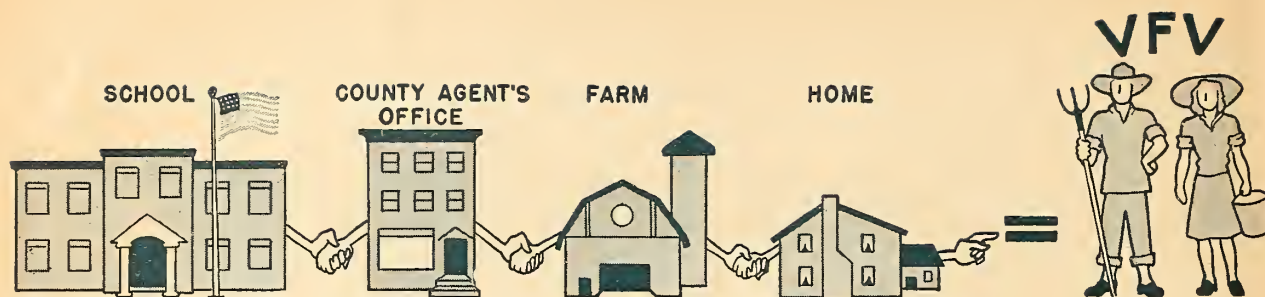
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Who Are the VFV's?

Victory Farm Volunteers are the Nation's town and city youth who are helping farmers with their production job in every State in the Union—soldiers of the soil in war and peace. Marching 875,000 strong in 1944, and using dungarees, overalls, or just plain old clothes as their uniforms, they went to war against the farm labor shortage. Thousands of tons of food for the allied war effort was their contribution.

VFV's are those members of the United States Crop Corps who are under 18 years of age. Under the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Labor Program, they are organized by the extension services of the land-grant colleges in the States. Each State extension service has a supervisor of youth labor for farms. He works with county agents and their county farm labor assistants in adapting this labor source to the needs of farmers. In 1945, VFV's are doing a bigger job to insure our food supply in 1946.

Agricultural leaders turned to young people as an emergency solution to their labor problem. At first farmers were skeptical of city-bred youngsters who knew little more about the farm than they had seen through automobile and train windows. Some of these doubts were borne out. But after farmers learned to direct the nimble fingers and teen-age energy of the VFV's to best advantage they discovered a surprisingly productive source of labor. Each year since 1942 they have called on increasing numbers of youth.

VFV's have learned to be hired men and harvest hands. They have swarmed into trucks, gone

to camps, and lived in the farmer's home in order to do the job. They have done almost every kind of farm work, and often have saved entire crops. And these young people have gained invaluable experience they will not forget.

Cooperating Agencies

In general, the schools of the Nation have been relied on to recruit and prepare youth for farm work, while the Extension Service has assumed responsibility for placement and supervision.

Nationally the VFV program has had the hearty cooperation of the United States Office of Education, youth-serving agencies, civic organizations, farm labor leaders, and others.

Agencies that have been especially helpful are:

Boy Scouts of America	National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work
Boys' Clubs of America	
Camp Fire Girls	National Federation of Settlements
Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor	National Jewish Welfare Board
4-H Clubs	Public Health Service
Girl Scouts	U. S. Employment Service
International Council of Religious Education	Young Men's Christian Association
National Catholic Welfare Conference, Youth Department	Young Women's Christian Association

The Record in 1944

875,000 boys and girls were on the Nation's roll of Victory Farm Volunteers. In 1943, 400,000 worked on farms.

1,708,000 placements of youth workers were made by the extension services of the 48 States and Hawaii.

29,000 VFV's were placed on farms for year-round work.

148,000 boys and girls received some training for farm work.

3 of every 10 emergency farm workers placed by the extension services were boys and girls under 18 years of age.

Thus Far in 1945

1,800,000 is the prospective number of VFV's to be placed through extension channels in 1945. This number includes 900,000 individual boys and girls.

295,326 placements of boys and girls had been made on farms throughout the Nation by June 30, 1945, as compared with 290,109 placements at the same date in 1944.

Boys and girls who want to do farm work can get information from their county agricultural agent, school principal, or local farm labor office. Most larger cities have a farm employment office.



Farmers Say:

"Eugene did a No. 1 job of driving the tractor. He was up early in the morning and assisted with the chores without being called. He did his work better than a man."

"I'd like the same boy I had last summer. He was very competent and willing to work."

"I've found these girls very satisfactory and the equal of men in detasseling corn."

"Those kids were a lifesaver to me in saving my cotton crop."

"He could load a truck better than any man I ever saw. He saved me numberless steps and was a great help."

"He was a good boy and a good worker, and I would like to have him another summer."

"He can do almost anything you put him to, and I wouldn't be without him."

"They [city girls] were without a doubt the best pickers and best-disciplined bunch I have ever had in 25 years. These girls saved several thousand quarts of berries."

"This was an industrious young man, and he made good on my farm."

"I couldn't have gotten along without him. A real worker—the best I ever had."

"He became one of the family, and with amazing rapidity learned how to handle machinery."



From coast



... wherever farmers need an extra hand to raise food crops from soil and seed, boys and girls from the city become willing workers. Like farm youth, who are toiling overtime in these busy years, Victory Farm Volunteers from town and city have a hand in just about every crop and every farm task. In Georgia for example, Athens school children harvested 32,993 pounds of cotton in 1944. In one New York county, youth picked 33,000 quarts of berries and 40 tons of green beans.

Fourteen thousand city youth in Minnesota went to the farm as "live-ins" one year. Early in the season VFFV's harvested \$550,000 worth of potatoes and \$46,302 worth of sugar beets last year. Boys and girls' young people's Nation-wide accomplishment. For across the land VFFV's are pioneers in a good-neighborhood

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It Takes — Selection . . .

To say, "Let's bring city youth to the farm," is one thing, but it's quite another to take these boys and girls from the school-room, sand lot, and drug store and make of them an effective farm labor force. Skillful planning is basic to a successful VFV program.

Once the farm labor needs have been determined in a county, the agricultural agent and his farm labor assistant decide on the number of youth that will be needed.

These workers may come from nearby towns, as in Worcester County, Mass., which boasts 400 "live-ins" from its own city of Worcester, or may be brought in from more distant areas.

Wherever they come from, it's a matter of first importance to get the right boy or girl for the job. Such factors as health, age, weight, and mental attitude as well as a volunteer's reasons for wanting to do farm work must be considered in the selective process. Best means by which this knowledge can be obtained are the personal interview and the school record.

Parental approval, of course, is necessary, and child-labor laws must be observed.

. . . Training . . .

The best introduction to the VFV job for teenagers is to caution them about what to expect. Certainly they need to be told that farm work, like genius, is 99 percent perspiration. But even a willing youngster must have instruction for a job he has never done before. Many farmers show the boy or girl what to do and how to do it. On-the-job instruction is often used where large groups of youngsters harvest fruit and vegetables. But the youth who fills the "hired hand's" shoes usually needs more preparation. And so special training programs have been set up in many States to make adjustments to farm life easier and to teach skills such as harnessing horses and milking cows.

Some high schools and junior highs give orientation courses. Some programs, like one in Illinois last year, call for week-end visits to farms and

homes of 4-H Club members. Other training courses have been set up on State agricultural college campuses. In youth camps, evening discussion, movies, and special programs are good training aides.

. . . Placement . . .

The placing of boys and girls on a farm or in a farm labor camp is usually a matter of fitting personality and ability to the farm and the job. Careful placement is difficult in running a large day-haul program, especially for highly seasonal crops. For the live-in youth and camper it must be done for successful results. When the boy or girl plans to live on a farm for a season, farm labor people usually approve the farm home where the young worker is to live. The importance of placement has been proved by boys and girls who fail to make good on one farm, but work out satisfactorily on another.

. . . Supervision . . .

For getting the best work done and keeping up morale, some kind of supervision is necessary. And supervision best assures to youth working conditions that are satisfactory and safe. Farmers, who usually pay the supervisors, are more and more convinced of their value. In large harvest operations, such as those in Cumberland County, Maine, supervised crews are found to accomplish more work. Supervisors keep work and wage records and straighten out misunderstandings between farmer and workers. As work leaders they assist with on-the-job instruction.

Supervision is not only important in the success of youth camps, but valuable on trucks when youngsters are hauled to the fields. For the live-ins, however, county farm labor assistants make regular visits to the farm home, where the city boy or girl may need help in making adjustments and warding off homesickness. Every effort is made to avoid accidents, and a special low-cost VFV insurance policy is available. County farm labor assistants can furnish information about the policy.



Three Kinds of Placement

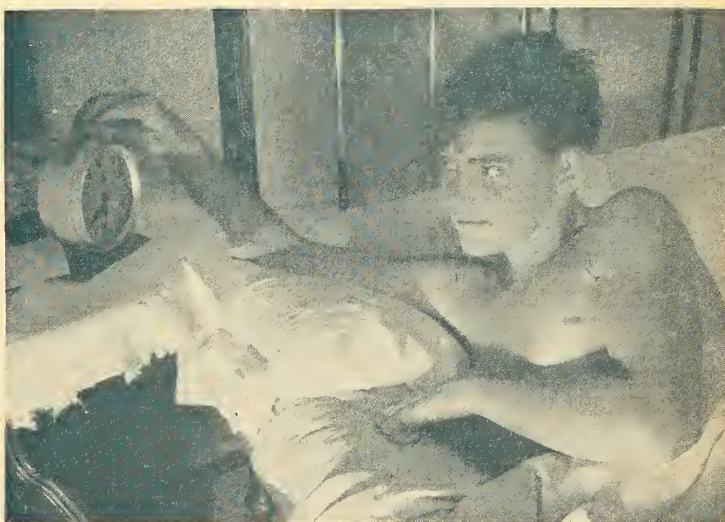
Day Hauls

Most of the Nation's VFV's—nearly 80 percent of them—are transported from town each day to nearby farms. Day hauls are the simplest way to use youth labor, but are practical only when harvest fields are not too far away. Farmers usually pick up the boys and girls at designated places and haul them in school busses, trucks, or cars. It's desirable for adult supervisors to accompany the workers. Safer transportation is assured when careful drivers, good brakes, and secure endgates are required. Last year in a single State 78,000 youth participated on a day-haul basis.



Live-Ins

The dairy farmer, the general farmer, and the rancher are in special need of someone to replace the hired hand. Boys from the city—and many a girl—have heeded the call to farms and learned to do just about every farm chore. An estimated 150,000 youth went to live on farms last year and learned a new way of life, reveled in sunshine and garden-fresh foods. The farm experience of these young people had the most educational value. Often they came to feel like a member of the farm family.



Camps

When day hauls are impractical, camps for youth labor are set up close enough to farms for convenient transportation. Because young people naturally enjoy camp life, they have great fun at these camps. When living and recreation facilities, plus supervision, have been good the camps have been highly successful. The combination of work and play has proved wholesome. The Extension Service and farmers cooperate in setting up the camps, and usually share the expense.



VFV Is Educational . . .

Congress had the farmer in mind when it enacted farm-labor legislation, but, who will deny that teen-agers who came to his aid also benefited?

Youth themselves say they learned how to perform many farm jobs, developed useful work habits, discovered what farm life is like, made new friendships, and felt the satisfaction of helping the war effort. They learned to be on their own, how to handle money, and to adjust to new situations.

In the opinion of Dr. Sidney B. Hall, of George Washington University, who was engaged to study the VFV Program and appraise its educational value, "One of the greatest byproducts of the VFV is the excellent work-experience opportunity and the really worth-while educational values which accrued to the youth concerned."

A boy who lived on a farm last summer explained: "I have many wonderful memories of my stay in Vermont—the first time I stripped a cow successfully; bringing home a newborn calf on a wagon because it was too weak to walk; the thrill of driving horses for the first time; watching the corn grow from 6-inch plants to tall, ear-heavy stalks over my head." He and many others have learned a farmer's way of life, gathered information in the fields of rural sociology and farm economics, although they might call it something else. Above all, they have gained respect for the farmer.

And farmers have been quick to realize the incidental benefits to be derived from this emergency arrangement. As one of them says: "For years the city has been able to show the farm boy what it has that is attractive, but I believe this is the first effort anyone has made to systematically show the city boy what we have to offer him in farm life."

A juvenile-court officer in a large city considers the program an antidote for delinquency. He noted that complaints dropped from 150 a month to 13 when boys and girls began to work on farms.

. . . And Healthful . . .

Out-of-doors on a farm means physical activity, sunshine, and fresh air, better organized sleep for city youth, and plenty of good, wholesome food to satisfy that increased appetite.

Youth Says:

"My experience was valuable because I learned about the culture and harvesting of the most important thing in our lives—food."

"It was an education not found in books."

"I learned how to take care of myself and my belongings. My work made me realize how hard people actually work for money."

"I would not exchange the things I have learned for all the tea in China."

"My experience not only made me realize the vital importance of preserving the farmer's produce, but also improved my ability to associate with all types of people in every imaginable kind of situation."

"Taking city boys out to the country was one of the best ideas this war has created. We're beginning to realize that the farmer has more on the ball than we ever thought he had."

"I am learning to love this new life, and I am surer than ever that I have chosen well in deciding some day to make it my own."

"This farm work arouses a spirit inside me—to help bring liberty, victory, and final peace to the land we all love."



FARM LABOR PROGRAM
EXTENSION SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.